

# Place and Resources Overview Committee

## 9 July 2026

### Dorset Local Visitor Economy Partnership Destination Management Plan For Recommendation to Cabinet

**Cabinet Member:**

Cllr R Biggs, Property & Assets and Economic Growth

**Local Councillor(s): All**

**Senior Leadership Team:**

J Britton - Executive Director, Regeneration, Infrastructure and Growth

**Report author and job title:**

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**Statutory Authority:** Local Government Act 2000

**Report status:** Public

**1. Executive summary (maximum of 500 words)**

- 1.1 “Local Visitor Economy Partnership” (LVEP) is a designation created by VisitEngland. Being part of an LVEP gives Dorset access to VisitEngland support including data, expertise, and marketing opportunities.
- 1.2 Dorset Council Cabinet approved the creation of Dorset LVEP with Dorset Council as Accountable Body in July 2024, and Dorset LVEP achieved accreditation with VisitEngland in May 2025.
- 1.3 A condition of all LVEPs is the creation of a Destination Management Plan (DMP).
- 1.4 The Dorset LVEP DMP 2026-2035 sets out a plan to create a year-round destination: addressing seasonality, enhancing visitor spend, improving perceptions of Dorset, strengthening accessibility, embedding sustainability, and enabling sector-wide collaboration.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

2.1 That Place and Resources Overview Committee recommend the endorsement of the Dorset Local Visitor Economy Partnership Destination Management Plan 2026-2035 to Cabinet

3. **Reason for the recommendation(s)**

3.1 The Visitor Economy affects tourists, businesses, jobs, the cultural and heritage offer, transport and infrastructure. The Destination Management Plan, developed by businesses, stakeholders, and cultural partners, provides a roadmap for a more resilient, sustainable, and competitive visitor economy that benefits all parts of Dorset year-round.

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#### **4. Dorset LVEP Destination Management Plan**

- 4.1 The Dorset DMP sets out a 10-year strategy to establish Dorset as a welcoming, vibrant, year-round visitor destination.
- 4.2 Developed through extensive consultation with businesses, stakeholders and cultural partners, the plan responds to key challenges including strong seasonality, rising operating costs, limited national awareness, and pressure on local infrastructure.
- 4.3 Dorset's visitor economy is a major economic driver, attracting over 22 million visitors annually and generating £1.66bn in direct spend, yet 36% of domestic overnight trips occur in July and August, demonstrating the need to spread demand more evenly across the year.
- 4.4 The DMP focuses on addressing seasonality, enhancing visitor spend, improving perceptions of Dorset, strengthening accessibility, embedding sustainability, and enabling sector-wide collaboration.
- 4.5 Growth opportunities centre on two high-potential year-round markets identified by recent government funded market segmentation research: the Nature & Culture segment and the Active & Mindful segment. By prioritising these audiences, Dorset can leverage its outstanding natural landscapes, rich heritage, cultural offer and variety of outdoor experiences.
- 4.6 Key actions include developing off-peak product, targeted marketing, experience mapping, and building cultural programming in quieter months. Improving data quality, empowering local businesses, and increasing Dorset's national profile are critical to unlocking long-term economic, environmental and community benefits.
- 4.7 Delivery of the DMP will rely on coordinated partnership across the industry, facilitated by the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP).
- 4.8 This plan provides the roadmap for a more resilient, sustainable and competitive visitor economy that benefits all parts of Dorset throughout the year.

#### **5. Alternative options considered**

5.1 The only alternatives to a Destination Management Plan with broad stakeholder support are having a more narrowly focussed Plan involving fewer participants or not having a Plan at all. The value of any plan would be reduced if it was not broadly supported, and it would also likely not meet VisitEngland's LVEP requirements, potentially leading to Dorset losing its LVEP accreditation, and therefore losing access to government-funded support. Having no plan would result in the same outcomes

#### **6. Legal considerations**

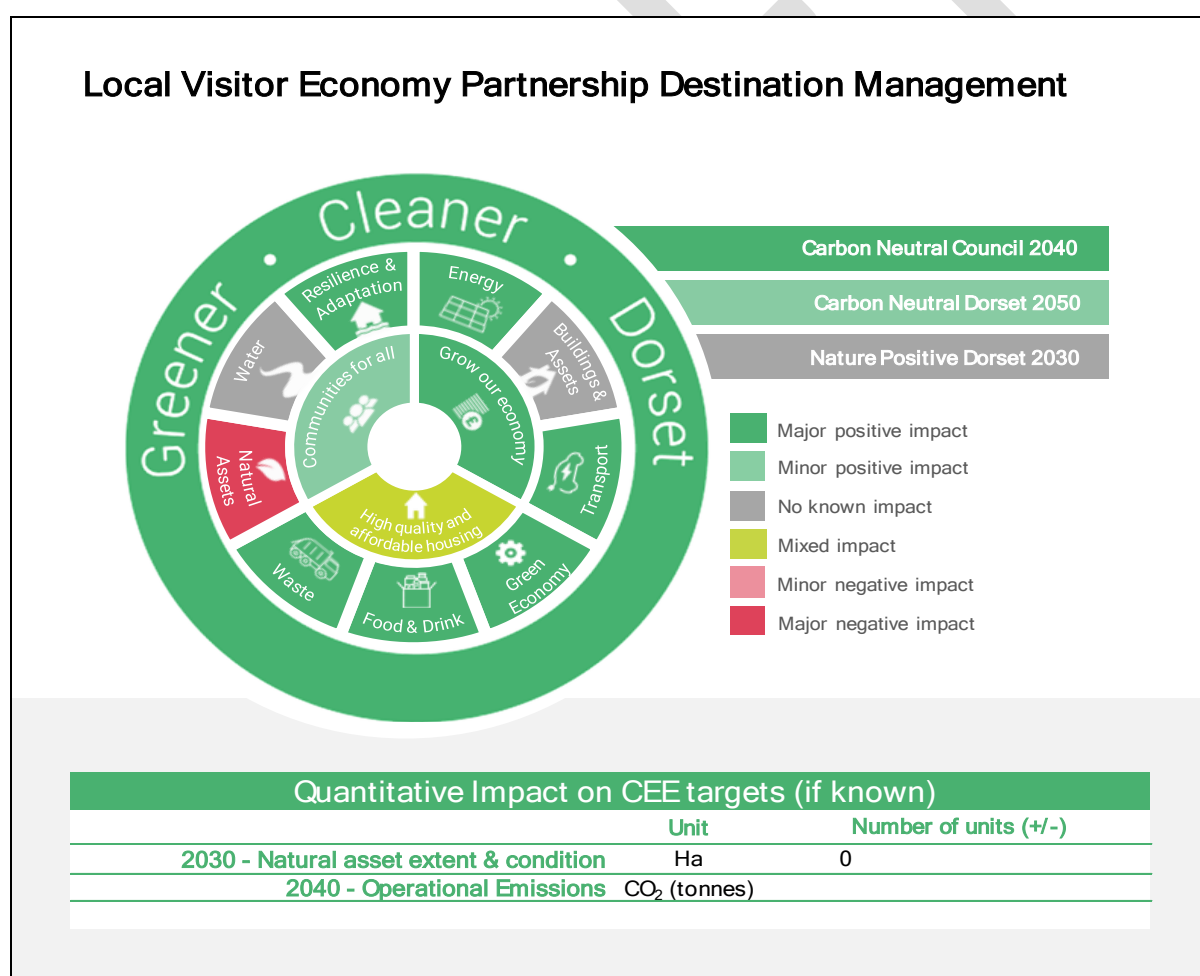
6.1 The Destination Management Plan is non-statutory and creates no legally binding obligations on any parties.

## 7. Financial implications

7.1 No additional Dorset Council resources are needed for the Plan. While no government funding has been offered to the LVEP, Dorset has already benefitted from non-financial support from VisitEngland due to it having an established LVEP. Having a satisfactory Destination Management Plan in place is a requisite of all LVEPs.

## 8. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

8.1 The visitor economy has a significant impact on Carbon emissions and the environment. Focus area five of the Plan is all about sustainability and regenerative tourism. This aligns with Dorset Council's ambitions in the natural environment, climate, and ecology strategy. The Climate wheel shows generally positive impacts and no negative impacts:



## 9. Well-being and health implications

9.1 The Plan places particular focus on the *Nature & Culture* and *Active & Mindful* market segments, both of which encourage access to greenspace and exercise, which is known to be beneficial for physical and mental health.

## **10. Risk implications**

10.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: LOW

Residual Risk: LOW

## **11. Equalities**

11.1 An EQIA screening was conducted as part of approval for the LVEP. “accessibility and welcome” is Focus Area 4 of the Plan, which will have positive implications for people with disabilities and mobility challenges. Improvements may also benefit Dorset residents.

## **12. Appendices**

12.1 Dorset Local Visitor Economy Partnership Destination Management Plan 2026-2035

12.2 Accessible Table of Climate Impacts and Table of Recommendations.

## **13. Background papers**

13.1 [Decisions for issue Dorset Local Visitor Economy Partnership - Dorset Council](#)

13.2 [2024 Dorset Market Segmentation SPF Research Report FINAL 51bbd205-30f5-4f1f-8ee5-2dcc2a6a224.pdf](#)

## **14. Report sign-off**

14.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)